



NEWS RELEASE

DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE

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For External Release

Garnishment assistance for Guard and Reserves

CLEVELAND, Ohio (Feb. 13) -- Each week, the country's demands on Guard and Reserve military members increase as more units are activated for the possibility of war with Iraq, to support anti-terrorist efforts and the tension with North Korea.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Directorate of Garnishment Operations has been working with the Federal Office of Child Support to address issues relating to activated Reservists and the payment of child support. The Director of Garnishment Operations, Rod Winn, has identified one scenario that is a concern for a significant number of activated Reservists.

"A civilian (who is a reservist) who works for a private company is called up or activated. That reservist has a child support order requiring payment of child support based on the income the member makes working at the private company. Upon activation, the reservist experiences a reduction in the amount of income he makes. If the reservist does not ask for a review and modification of the child support obligation, from the child support agency, the member can incur a large child support arrearage while serving in the reserves."

To address this concern, the DFAS Garnishment Operations and The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement have developed the following guidelines for reservists and ask that they contact the state child support agency regarding a review of their child support obligation.

When should you contact your state's child support agency?

You should contact your state child support agency regarding a review of your child support obligation if:

- Your **income** level has changed, or will change, you may be eligible for the agency to review and adjust the amount of your support order.
- Your support payments are being withheld from your paycheck, the state agency can ensure the **withholding** is transferred to DFAS on a timely basis to prevent or minimize missed payments. Also, ask your current employer to notify the state agency of your deployment and to provide all needed information.
- You have a child support **hearing** scheduled, the agency can try to move it up or let the court or hearing officer know your service status.
- Your child support order includes **health care coverage** for your child (medical support), your child is eligible for the military health coverage TRICARE. The agency may be able to assist you in signing your child up with DEERS.

For more information you can access the following Web sites:

- State child support enforcement agencies at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/extinf.htm#exta>
- OCSE Information Memorandum (IM)-01-09 at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/new/reserve_activation.html
- DoD at <https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/Legal> under “Family Law Matters”.

This issue can have serious consequences for the Reserve military member and dependent children relying on the support. All reservists, with support obligations, are urged to take time and review the garnishment guidelines.

About DFAS

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the world’s largest finance and accounting operation. In fiscal 2002, DFAS paid 5.7 million people, processed more than 11.2 million contractor invoices, made 7.3 million travel payments and disbursed more than \$346.6 billion while reducing overall costs to customers by \$144 million. For more about the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, please visit <http://www.dfas.mil>.

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